

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. §1.111
USSN: 09/852,274

Please delete the present Abstract of the Disclosure and replace it with the following new Abstract of the Disclosure.

In order to provide speech coder and speech decoder where excellent sound qualities are obtained even at a low bit rate, a plural position-sets storing circuit (450) holds a plurality of sets for positions of pulses in the speech coder,— In addition, an excitation quantization circuit (350) calculates distortions for speech signal by the use of every sets of the positions of pulses, and selects a set of positions with a minimized distortion. The ~~judgement~~judgment information representative of the selected set is delivered with a small number of bits.